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DLMD/Armitage note:
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Rich200204815
United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

MAR - 5 2002

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

S/ES

MAR 2002
Dep Sec
Has SeenCONFIDENTIAL

DECL: 03/04/12

TO: The Deputy Secretary

FROM: WHA - Lino Gutierrez, Acting LG

SUBJECT: Venezuelan President Chávez Visits the USS Yorktown

Venezuelan President Chávez traveled to Curacao March 2 where he visited the Venezuelan Navy's logistics support ship Ciudad Bolívar and the cruiser USS Yorktown. The Ciudad Bolívar's commander requested a courtesy call for Chávez from the Yorktown's commander. Both ships were participating in the multilateral UNITAS 43-02 exercise.

- Rear Admiral Green, Commander of U.S. Naval Forces South (NAVSOUTH), escorted Chávez on a tour of the Yorktown and reported that Chávez did all the talking, but said nothing of substance. The Yorktown was closed to all press, except a representative from the GOV press office. The only press report of Chávez's visit to Curacao was a brief story in Caracas daily *El Nacional* that quoted FM Dávila asserting that Venezuela's participation in UNITAS was "a goodwill gesture by the U.S." During a gift exchange with RADM Green, Chávez noted Venezuela's historic connections with the U.S.
- Prior to the Yorktown visit, Chávez addressed the UNITAS commanders from Colombia, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the U.S. topside aboard the Ciudad Bolívar. Chávez declared that Venezuela was committed, as evidenced by Venezuela's participation in this multilateral exercise, to counternarcotics, counterterrorism, and anti-crime cooperation.
- Below decks on the Ciudad Bolívar, Chávez addressed the crew of the ship. Chávez presided over a "loyalty oath" ceremony and emphasized Venezuela's important role in the Caribbean asserting Venezuela's sphere of control extended to the seas west of Dominica and south of Hispaniola.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE Reason: E.O. 12958 1.5 (b)

REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON

DATE/CASE ID: 01 JUN 2007 200304421

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Thank you -
RLL

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